

Biography of Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords

Gabrielle Giffords is the U.S. Representative for the Eighth District of Arizona, a diverse area that covers 9,000 square miles including a 114 mile border with Mexico.

Giffords serves on the House Armed Services Committee where she fights for our military men and women and their families and the installations she represents at Fort Huachuca and Davis-Monthan Air Force Base. On the House Science and Technology Committee Giffords promotes an agenda of energy independence and solar initiatives in an effort to make Southern Arizona the “Solar-con Valley” of the nation. On the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Giffords monitors our country’s positions abroad, especially relationships in the Western Hemisphere and their impact on comprehensive immigration reform in the United States.

A third generation Arizonan and the youngest woman ever elected to the Arizona State Senate, Giffords represented her hometown of Tucson in the Arizona Legislature from 2000-2005. During her service in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, Giffords worked on legislation to expand health care coverage for Arizona families; to create and attract high wage jobs to Arizona; and to protect Arizona’s environment and open spaces. She served on the Appropriations, Commerce and Economic Development and Finance Committees.

As former President and Chief Executive Officer of El Campo Tire, Inc., Giffords was able to utilize her experience as a small businesswoman with a broad background in national and international economic development. A 1996 graduate of Cornell University with a Master’s Degree in Regional Planning, she is also a graduate of Scripps College where she was awarded a William Fulbright Scholarship to study for a year in Chihuahua, Mexico. Between her undergraduate work and her masters she worked as a researcher in San Diego studying the effects of Operation Gatekeeper II on the San Ysidro Port of Entry.

Experienced in international relations, Giffords served as President of the Atlantic Association of Young Political Leaders, represented the National Committee on China-US Relations as a Young Leader’s Forum Fellow and was a German Marshall Fund Manfred-Worner Fellow. In 2005 Giffords was selected for the inaugural two-year class of the Aspen-Rodel Fellowships in Public Leadership.

For combining her strong business background with a powerful commitment to public service, Giffords was named Woman of the Year by Tucson Business Edge in 2005; the YWCA named her Woman on the Move the same year. For her commitment to protecting the environment, she was named Legislator of the Year by the Arizona Planning Association and Most Valuable Player by the Sierra Club. She was awarded the Top 10 Technology Legislator of the Year award by the Arizona Technology Council for three straight years - 2003, 2004, 2005. She was named the Legislator of the Year in 2004 by the Mental Health Association of Arizona. She was also recently named one of America’s Eight Young Leaders Worth Watching by Gannett News Service.

Giffords’ commitment to her community has not been limited to her service in the Legislature. She has devoted her time as a member of over a dozen boards including 162nd Air National Guard Fighter Wing Minuteman Committee, the Metropolitan YMCA, the Anti-Defamation League, the Breast Cancer Boot Camp and the Tohono Chul Park. Gabrielle is a member of Congregation Chaverim.

With her family living in Southern Arizona, Giffords has strong ties to Tucson and Sierra Vista. Her father served on the school board in Tanque Verde District and her mother is an art conservator. Her grandparents lived in Southeastern Arizona and are buried in Ft. Huachuca. Giffords and her fiancé Mark Kelly enjoy hiking and spending time in the canyons and desert of Arizona.